

Lessons Learned Record of Interview

Project Title:				
LL-01				
Interview Code:				
LL-01 [REDACTED]				
Date/Time:				
October 6, 2014; 10:30-11:30am				
Location:				
Washington, DC				
SIGAR Attendees:				
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Non- attribution Basis:	Yes	x	No	
				On Background; Reference Organization but Not Title
Recorded:	Yes		No	x
Recording File Record Number:				
n/a				
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Reviewed By: (Name, title and date)				
Key Topics:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Origins of Historical Research on Iraq• AfPak Hands Program• Compiling an Historical Analysis of Afghanistan Reconstruction				

(b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)

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Origins of Historical Research on Iraq

Around 2007-2008, Iraq started as a lessons learned project, but it atrophied. There was only one guy working on it. It seemed putting a single author on it, however, was most expedient.

We did another similar project on the anatomy of the Middle East peace process regarding a history of Clinton in the Middle East. We focused on a single policy over the course of two years (1999-2000). We had five historians and interns working on it. We knocked on doors, identified which part of bureaucracy had the documents. We accessed safes and made cold calls rather than just request cold call data.

You'll want to look at layers, not just decision makers. Diplomacy, pontification, mobilization and posturing. You'll have to strike a balance between what you want to say versus what people want to read. I think we will create one volume with regards to Afghanistan. Look at the interplay across functions rather than through levels of decision makers.

AfPak Hands Program

PFTs – no continuity of concept and who is giving guidance for these things or trying to give guidance and shape them. Navy commanders were leading PRTs who otherwise may not have been commanders. Questionable service selection: how were these commanders selected? AfPak Hands was Mike Mullins' baby. In 2010, there was an NDU visitors meeting to mobilize behind the biggest programs. Services would not adjust personnel to support the AfPak program and they did not allocate the correct faculty, either. There should have been a prairie fire behind this but there was nothing more than a small campfire. There were selection criteria for services to NDU, but it was very difficult to get service schedules to line up right. National War College didn't do it. No buy-in from other institutions. Inertia and complication based on new curriculum, which competed with current curriculum. The program turned on a dime with this curriculum.

Compiling an historical analysis on Afghanistan Reconstruction

(b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)

You're casting a very wide net with this approach using oral history; it's very difficult. Oral histories in research are more helpful when you can present key documents and ask for feedback.

Functional elements of a history of Afghanistan could take you three years. But a layered approach is not doable in three years. (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)

It could also be helpful to research the AfPak Coordination Cell, driven by JCS and research Holbrooke's shop while he was SRAP.

(b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)